



The NICHD Connection

February 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Postbac Workshop Recap: The Life of a Clinical Researcher	1
Letter from the Editor	2
Recap of "Faculty Positions: Beyond the Traditional" Workshop	4
The Rep Report	6
Three-Minute Talks (TmT) Competition 2019	7
Upcoming NIH-Wide OITE Events	8
February Announcements	9
February Events	14
PHD Comics	16

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Shana R. Spindler, PhD
Shana.Spindler@gmail.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Nichole Swan

BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPHY

See **Credits page** online

CONTRIBUTORS

Suna Gulay, PhD
Christa Ventresca
Katie Wendover

Postbac Workshop Recap: The Life of a Clinical Researcher

By Katie Wendover

Each year, many young scientists pursue post-baccalaureate (postbac) positions at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to learn from pioneers in the field of clinical research. To provide postbacs with an opportunity to think critically about this profession, the NICHD Office of Education hosted a Q&A session on Monday, December 10, with Dr. Miranda Broadney, acting program director of the Pediatric Endocrine Fellowship Training Program in NICHD, and Dr. Stephanie Chung, assistant clinical investigator in the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

The panelists began by describing their journeys into clinical research. Dr. Chung, a trained pediatric endocrinologist, said that she "really got the fire under [her]" when she decided to pursue research. The option of pursuing both a medical degree (MD) and doctor of philosophy (PhD) was somewhat limited, as the University of the West Indies (where she completed her post-graduate training) did not offer a dual degree program. However, she still dedicates a considerable amount of time to research—about 75% of her workday—while reserving the other 25% for clinical work.

Dr. Broadney, also a pediatric endocrinologist, wanted to help the community and desired medical training with an emphasis in clinical investigation. A master's in public health and medical degree joint program at the Ohio State University College of Medicine allowed her to combine these passions. Dr. Broadney estimated that she dedicates around 90% of her time at work to research, as other fellows see many of the patients in the department. Outside of research activities, Dr. Broadney sees healthy volunteers in clinical trials on a weekly basis.

While both Drs. Chung and Broadney cited the logistics and time commitment of MD/PhD training as a consideration for not pursuing that degree themselves, Dr. Broadney emphasized that the extra time commitment should not discourage students from pursuing that route. Both Drs. Chung and Broadney agreed that medical fellows often must fight for their research to get off the ground, especially outside of the NIH.

(continued on page 3)

Letter from the Editor

My intention this month was to write about career decisions, to accompany the workshop recaps on medical degrees and teaching options available to scientists. But as I was trying to craft a piece on making choices, I realized that the “good” choice isn’t always obvious. We each have unique life situations that dictate options available to us. I should know; I began my scientific career with the intent to become a tenure-track professor, but then I married an Air Force officer who moves every few years. My decisions, therefore, became bounded by the parameters of an active-duty military lifestyle. My choices shifted to focus on general life aims rather than one specific career goal.

I won’t lie—it’s not an easy process. I spent a lot of time reflecting on why I pursued research, and what I saw as my role in the scientific community. The answers to those questions will vary from fellow to fellow. From my personal experience, I can affirm that being aware of your end goal can lead to a satisfying decision, even with a limited set of choices available to you. Think about what you want out of life as a scientist, and then use your choices to press the pedal and steer in that direction.

But first, let’s take a quick trip to our [announcements](#) and [events](#) this month. Details for the [2019 Three-minute-Talk competition](#) are available, and the annual [Graduate Student Research Symposium](#) is happening in just a few weeks. If you’re looking for other opportunities to connect with fellows, Suna Gulay’s “[Rep Report](#),” where she announces Fellows Committee (FelCom) events and new committee positions, is a great place to start!

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

We welcome your questions, comments, and ideas. Please contact our editor at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.

Postbac Workshop Recap: The Life of a Clinical Researcher

(continued from page 1)

So, how do these doctors balance their work with their personal lives? Dr. Broadney explained that her plans are constantly changing, saying that as a clinical researcher “your schedule is going to ebb and flow.” Despite the unpredictability of this lifestyle, Dr. Broadney stressed the importance of prioritizing time with your family and the need for a supportive community. Following up on that idea, Dr. Chung pointed out the benefits of a career in research, as it allows her to spend more time working from home. However, she emphasized that research does not constitute less work, “it’s just in a different venue.”

Wrapping up the session, Dr. Chung said that postbacs at the NIH are in the unique position to find what balance works for them. Overall, the successes of Drs. Broadney and Chung testify to the fact that multiple paths lead to success in clinical research. Dr. Chung captured this thought well, saying that postbacs “don’t have to figure out the [next] ten to twenty years,” but instead should remember to “have fun along the way.”

Drs. Broadney and Chung welcome any questions emailed to miranda.broadney@nih.gov and stephanie.chung@nih.gov.



Recap of “Faculty Positions: Beyond the Traditional” Workshop

By Christa Ventresca

As a scientist, you are likely familiar with several types of faculty positions that exist in higher education, such as the coveted tenure-track professorship, but what else is out there? In a new workshop hosted by the NICHD Office of Education on December 10, 2018, Dr. Sydella Blatch, postdoc/visiting fellow program manager at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), talked about the different types of higher education institutions and faculty positions available to scientists. One thing to keep in mind is that there are always exceptions to these descriptions, and some institutions and individual positions are unique. But all positions involve some combination of research, teaching, and service (commitment to the institution or the community).

THE CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

First, Dr. Blatch introduced the “Carnegie Classification” of institutions. This is a way to classify schools on the basis of research activities and degrees offered. Schools that offer associate’s or bachelor’s degrees with few research programs are classified separately from schools with master’s/doctoral programs and ample research work. Each type of university or college is further sub-divided by amount or type of research/education programs available. For example, doctoral-granting universities are classified as R1 (the highest amount of research), R2 or R3, and master’s-granting colleges and universities receive the designation of M1, M2 or M3, depending on the number of degrees awarded. Dr. Blatch cautioned that you shouldn’t rely on the school’s classification to know the extent of ongoing research. Applicants should research each school’s culture and programs to ballpark how much research is expected from faculty.

TYPES OF FACULTY POSITIONS

Dr. Blatch next discussed three main types of faculty appointments:

1. Teaching only
2. Teaching with some research
3. Combined research- and teaching-intensive

(continued on page 5)

Recap of “Faculty Positions: Beyond the Traditional” Workshop

(continued from page 4)

Teaching faculty have a full teaching load and do not have time for research. Their schedule is described as 5:5, meaning that they teach five classes in the fall and five in the spring. Their tenure is primarily based on teaching quality above anything else. One thing to keep in mind with these positions is that they may be teaching to open admissions, meaning that the students come from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Dr. Blatch next described positions that are mostly teaching with some research, such as teaching at a liberal arts college. Their schedule is described as 4:4, and again teaching quality is what counts here. The purpose of research at these institutions is not to further science but to educate students, which can be an adjustment for some bench scientists. When applying, do not try to impress them with the novelty of your work, but instead highlight how much your students will learn and how good you are at training them quickly.

Positions that are split between intensive research and some teaching can have unpredictable teaching requirements. The teaching load varies, but it could be as high as two to four courses per semester, which is a lot in addition to performing research. It is important to make sure with these positions that the combined research and teaching expectations are realistic.

If you have any questions—as this was a brief overview of the detailed discussions—Dr. Blatch encourages you to email her at sydella.blatch@nih.gov. She is also interested in leading more teaching-related workshops in the future, so stay tuned for more from Dr. Blatch!

The Rep Report

By Suna Gulay, PhD

As the current NICHD Basic Sciences Institutes and Centers (IC) Representative, I represent NICHD postdoctoral fellows at the NIH Fellows Committee (FelCom) meeting every month and share the latest news with you here. Do you have a concern or question that you want brought up at the next meeting? Contact me at suna.gulay@nih.gov!



Dear NICHD fellows,

Are you looking to improve your “soft” skills, gain leadership experience, or find FAES (Foundation for the Advanced Education in the Sciences) teaching opportunities? Make sure to subscribe to the FELLOW-L listserv to learn about the latest committee openings and the FAES courses in need of instructors. Go to list.nih.gov, login or create an account, search for FELLOW-L, and request to subscribe. You can also use this website to subscribe to Scientific Interest Groups that interest you.

Are you a visiting fellow trying to adjust to the United States and looking to get involved in the postdoctoral community or an NIH-wide committee? In addition to the FELLOW-L listserv, you can join the Visiting Fellows Committee (VFC). Subscribe to the VISITINGFELLOWS listserv to learn more about this active committee, follow their social events, and to join. Follow the steps above for navigating list.nih.gov, and search for VISITINGFELLOWS.

As a general reminder, you can always contact me (suna.gulay@nih.gov) to learn more about various NIH-wide committees and how your participation can enhance your training.



Three-Minute Talks (TmT) Competition 2019: Science Communication Training and Awards Program

NOW SEEKING POSTDOC & CLINICAL FELLOWS, GRADUATE STUDENTS & POSTBACS

- » Learn how to explain your research effectively to a broad scientific audience, in three minutes or less, with one-on-one professional training from public speaking coach Scott Morgan
- » Get the chance to win up to \$1,000 for use towards approved training or travel to a scientific meeting
- » Visit the [NICHD TmT Program website](#) for more details: up to 10 DIR fellows (postbac, predoctoral, postdoctoral, visiting and clinical) are invited to compete for these science communication honors

2019 TmT PROGRAM TIMELINE AND DETAILS

Friday, February 22	Deadline to Enter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » To enter, complete the 2019 Submission Form » The submission form, competition rules, and judging criteria are available at the NICHD TmT Webpage
Tuesday, February 26	“Speaking About Science” Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Tips on scientific storytelling with only one slide » Speaking in plain language while addressing the human health relevance for your research » Creating effective visual aids
Wednesday, March 13	Individual Coaching/Practice Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Meet one-on-one with public speaking coach Scott Morgan » Practice your talk and obtain feedback on oral presentation skills and speech development
Wednesday, May 8	NICHD TmT Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Three finalists will be chosen to advance to the next round » Finalists will each be awarded \$500 for approved training/travel
Thursday, June 27	NIH TmT Competition (With NICHD, NHGRI, NEI, NIAMS, NIDCR & NCATS fellows)



1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be chosen to receive an additional \$500 training/travel award

Upcoming NIH-Wide Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE) Events

For more information and registration, please visit [Upcoming OITE Events](#).

OITE Orientation for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows (Feb 5)

Workplace Dynamics III: Conflict & Feedback (Feb 6)

Planning for Career Satisfaction and Success (Feb 7)

Writing Personal Statements for Professional School (Feb 8)

Postbac Seminar Series (Feb 12)

The Academic Job Search: Evaluating Positions and Negotiating Offers
(Feb 19)

15TH ANNUAL NIH GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, February 21, 9 am – 4:45 pm

Natcher Conference Center

The daylong event includes:

- » Keynote address
- » Elevator pitch competition
- » Student talks
- » Poster presentations of dissertation research
- » Presentation of the annual Outstanding Mentor Awards
- » The annual GPP graduation ceremony
- » NIH Graduate Student Research Awards (NGSRAs)
- » Community networking event

For more information, please visit: <https://www.training.nih.gov/gsc/symposium/15th>.

February Announcements

ARE YOU A BUDDING PHOTOGRAPHER? CHECK THIS OUT

The NICHD Office of Education is seeking a fellow with photography experience for the upcoming fellows retreat. Your photography of the event will appear in the retreat recap issue of *The NICHD Connection* this summer. If you are interested, please contact Nicki Swan (jonasnic@mail.nih.gov) for additional details.



COMMUNICATE YOUR RESEARCH TO THE PUBLIC

Did you know? The NICHD Office of Communications posts intramural research findings on the institute's social media accounts. They're looking for fellows to discuss their work and pose for pictures in the lab, to offer a behind-the-scenes look at research. If you are interested or have biomedical art images to share, please contact Linda Huynh, PhD, at linda.huynh@nih.gov.

If you have an accepted manuscript that is potentially newsworthy for the general public, please email the office's press team at nichdpress@mail.nih.gov before the paper is published. Include a copy of the manuscript and a brief, plain language explanation on why the work is important.

(continued on page 10)

February Announcements

(continued from page 9)

THE BUSINESS OF SCIENCE: YOUR GUIDE TO CAREER SUCCESS

A new training for fellows and graduate students preparing for their professional career transition
Starting in April—Register now!

We will offer this certificate program by [SciPhD](#) as a four-day course in April and May at the NIH. Enrollment will be open for 40 NICHD trainees.

The course is designed to help academic scientists prepare for their next positions in academia, industry, or government—research or non-research. Students will experience hands-on learning of the business and social skills necessary to succeed in the professional world.

At present, the course is also offered at highly respected research institutes, such as New York University, University of California San Francisco, University of California Irvine, and the New York Academy of Sciences. Ninety percent of the people who applied for jobs while taking the course reported that *The Business of Science* helped them land an interview or job offer!

Throughout the program, you will have the exciting opportunity to:

- » Discover the many career paths in which having a PhD can make you a competitive job candidate
- » Develop your professional communication, mentoring, project management and negotiating skills, as well as your financial literacy
- » Research a job ad and identify the scientific, business, and social skills that the company is looking for
- » Develop a targeted resume that demonstrates your specific qualifications
- » Expand your science network
- » Take part in mock interviews that will prepare you for your own job searches

Course instructors will hone into common research practices that academic scientists are already familiar with, to help in the understanding of business concepts, and to demonstrate how your own experiences can mold you into a competitive job candidate.

The certificate program schedule: four, full-day sessions (9 AM – 5 PM) as follows:

Session 1	Business of Science, and Communications	Monday, April 1
Session 2	Developing People, Negotiating with your Advisor, and Building Effective Teams	Monday, April 15
Session 3	Applied Communication & Networking, and Financial Literacy	Friday, May 3
Session 4	Negotiating Total Compensation & Leadership Styles, and Project Management, Wrap-up & Graduation	Monday, May 20

If you would like to register, please contact Dr. Erin Walsh (erin.walsh@nih.gov).

(continued on page 11)

February Announcements

(continued from page 10)

NIH GRANT WRITING COURSE

Are you planning to apply for a NIH research grant in 2019? There are various [application due dates for NIH grants](#), and we are offering a grant writing course that's just for you!

In collaboration with three other institutes, we are offering an **NIH Grant Writing Course** for fellows this April and May. Led by Dr. Paula Gregory (Professor, Department of Genetics, Louisiana State University), this course will help students prepare a successful NIH grant proposal, with special emphasis on the career transition "K" grant series. With high reviews from past participants, NHGRI has offered this course for several years, and as a result, many of their fellows have been awarded NIH grants!

In a small-group setting, classes will combine didactic presentations with group discussions, assignments, and proposal writing. A distance learning component will allow you to submit writings between the in-person meetings and receive edits and valuable feedback. Participants will also conduct an NIH mock study section. During the process of scoring real grant applications, trainees will learn about the review process and the key aspects of a successful application.

Below is the schedule for this on-campus course (must attend all sessions):

- » **May 2:** 1 PM – 4 PM
- » **May 3:** 9 AM – 12 PM
- » **May 23:** 11 AM – 4 PM
- » **May 24:** 9 AM – 12 PM
- » **May 30:** 1 PM – 4 PM
- » **May 31:** 9 AM – 12 PM

There are four spots available for NICHD fellows.

If you would like to join this course, please email Dr. Erin Walsh at erin.walsh@nih.gov and indicate which NIH grant you are planning to apply for.

(continued on page 12)

February Announcements

(continued from page 11)

GENETICS POLICY AND GENETICS EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

From the [American Society of Human Genetics website](#):

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2019 Genetics and Public Policy, and Genetics Education and Engagement fellowships.

These fellowships are cosponsored by the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI).

The Genetics and Public Policy Fellowship is designed as a bridge for genetics professionals wishing to transition to a policy career. This unique fellowship provides three separate types of policy experience: within NHGRI's Policy and Program Analysis Branch; on Capitol Hill serving elected officials in the Legislative Branch; and at ASHG in the non-profit science advocacy sector.

The Genetics Education and Engagement fellowship program is designed for genetics professionals (or life scientists with substantial experience in genetics or genomics) who: have an advanced degree, are early in their careers, and are interested in developing and implementing genetic and genomic literacy, engagement, diversity, and/or professional development initiatives for audiences at all educational or career levels. The fellow will participate in rotations at the NHGRI and ASHG, and typically a third organization involved in genetic and genomic literacy, engagement, diversity, or professional development.

For more information, and to apply, visit [Genetics & Public Policy Fellowship](#) and [Genetics Education & Engagement Fellowship](#).

(continued on page 13)

February Announcements

(continued from page 12)

JUDGES NEEDED FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCIENCE FAIR

Give back to the community by volunteering to judge!

From the [Science Montgomery website](#):

The Montgomery County Science Fair is an opportunity for several hundred Senior High and Middle School students to think creatively, problem solve, learn how to carry out a science experiment, and have some fun while doing so. *Our Fair's success depends upon the many scientists who volunteer to judge at the Fair.*

The Science Fair will be held on Saturday, March 23, 2019 at the [FDA White Oak Campus, 10903 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20993](#).

Register to judge by Saturday, February 24. For more information, and to register, visit: [Science Fair Category Judges](#).

CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH COURSE FOR PHD STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS

The annual Clinical and Translation Research Course for PhD Students at the NIH Clinical Center is accepting applications beginning February 1, 2019, for this summer's course, which will run **July 8-19, 2019**.

This course is ideal for graduate students or postdocs who are interested in learning about how PhD scientists can contribute to translational research. No prior clinical experience is required.

For a course overview, eligibility requirements, and selection process, please visit the course website ([Clinical and Translation Research Course](#)).

February Events

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, NOON – 1 PM

Rescheduled from January 14, 2019 Postbac Course

“Professionalism in Medicine”

April Walker, MD

To register for this session, please email Dr. Erin Walsh (erin.walsh@nih.gov).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, NOON – 1 PM

Rescheduled from December 3, 2018 Postbac Course

“Science & Society: From Basic Science to Technology”

Mona Orr, PhD

To register for this session, please email Dr. Erin Walsh (erin.walsh@nih.gov).

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 3 – 4 PM

NICHD Fellows Advisory Committee Meeting

The committee meets monthly to exchange ideas and informally discuss ways we can enhance and tailor the training experience within the NICHD intramural program. Please contact Dr. Erin Walsh at erin.walsh@nih.gov if you are interested in joining the group.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 10 AM – NOON

“Identify the Career for You and Learn How to Build Your Network”

In this workshop, Drs. Faith Harrow (training director at NHGRI) and Yvette Pittman will introduce you to the career planning tools My Individual Development Plan ([myIDP](#)) and Active Career Exploration ([ACE](#)). Using these tools, you will assess your skills, interests and values; see how they align with various career paths; and “build your network from zero”—all leading to career success. Please email Dr. Erin Walsh (erin.walsh@nih.gov) if you are interested in attending.

(continued on page 15)

February Events

(continued from page 14)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 & MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Preparing for the Job Market: Individual Coaching Sessions

Our industry careers consultant, Lauren Celano, will be available for 30- or 60-minute one-on-one sessions with fellows on Wednesday, February 20, and Monday, February 25.

The content of these sessions is flexible—feel free to discuss and ask questions about anything related to the industry job market and how to enhance your competitiveness, and/or receive individualized feedback on your current application materials. Possible discussion points may include:

- » Tailoring your resume and/or cover letter to a specific job posting
- » Job searching strategies tailored to your interest
- » Understanding the types of industry jobs available to PhD scientists
- » Tips for improving your LinkedIn page
- » Ways to improve your networking skills for industry careers

Lauren Celano is the co-founder and CEO of [Propel Careers](#), a Boston-based life science search and career development firm focused on connecting talented individuals with entrepreneurial life sciences companies. Propel works with current leaders and actively cultivates future leaders through full-time placement, mentoring, career coaching, and networking. Propel Careers is engaged across all areas of life sciences, including therapeutics, medical devices, healthcare IT, diagnostics, and consulting.

There are still five slots available. Please email Dr. Erin Walsh at erin.walsh@nih.gov if you would like to sign up for an individual session with Lauren.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 10 AM – 12 PM

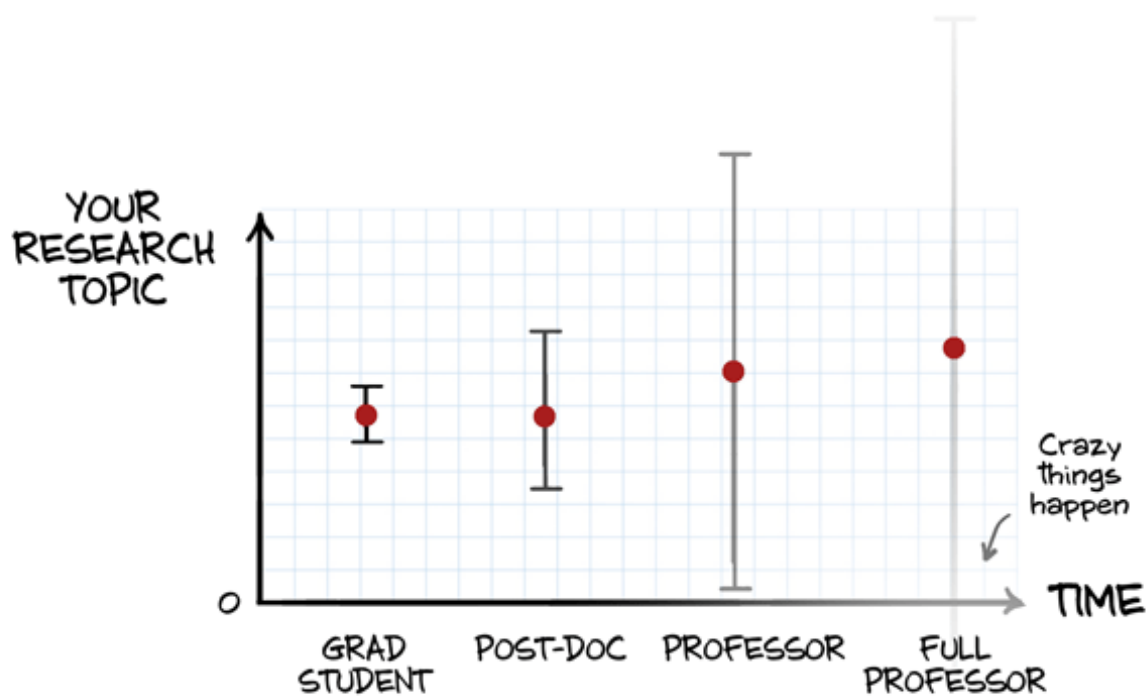
“Speaking about Science: Long Talks”

Public speaking coach Scott Morgan

Targeted towards postdocs and graduate students, the core of the workshop is a working discussion on introductions to ensure that a presentation is relevant and engaging for a variety of audiences—this becomes critical for job talks or even formally presenting data to your lab group. Other topics will include theme, focus, amounts of data, and exit strategies.

There are 25 spots available for this workshop. To register, please contact Dr. Erin Walsh at erin.walsh@nih.gov.

PHD Comics



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